



Runes of the North

Sigurd F. Olson

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In *Runes of the North* Sigurd Olson explores his feelings about the haunting appeal of the wilderness. He recounts how the legends of the northern vastness of Canada and Alaska have influenced him. In the introduction, Olson writes, "My runes have come from the wilderness, for in its solitude, silence, and freedom I know there are moments of insight when ancient truths do stand out more vividly, and one senses anew his relationship to the earth and to all life".

Runes of the North explores these values, insights, and truths. Olson weaves the tales and myths with his own stories and experiences as an explorer, writer, grandfather, and biologist. "This inner world has to do with the wilderness from which we came", he writes, "timelessness, cosmic rhythms, and the deep feelings men have for an unchanged environment".

Olson tells of Native American legends and traditions, like dream catchers and wild rice harvests, as well as the pure pleasure of the Finnish sauna. Each story portrays the special magic one finds in the wilderness and is filled with moments, that Olson writes, "are worth waiting for, and when they come in some unheralded instant of knowing, they are of the purest gold".

Runes of the North Details

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From Reader Review Runes of the North for online ebook

Greg says

Beautifully written by one of the country's preeminent professors, naturalists, and north woodsmen. Olson was a former President of the National Parks Association and a consultant to the Department of the Interior.

This, along with his companion books ("The Singing Wilderness," "Listening Point," and "The Lonely Land"), offer some of the most intimate and carefully observed accounts of the Boundary Waters and canoe country of northern Minnesota and southern Ontario, Canada. His insights are both scholarly and deeply personal.

Rick says

Olson was the poet philosopher of the great northern wilderness. His advocacy on environmental issues lives on. But his love of the wild is what grabs me. It doesn't hurt that he's a good word smith.

Laura says

A pleasurable way to remind yourself of the power of language. Sigurd Olson does the near impossible, connecting his experience to perfect description. His stories are even more powerful in his spartan style; with seeming ease, he gets right to the essence. You are there with him in the moment. Bonus: he's talking about nature. Get your itches scratched with this book, as Olson takes you through uncommon but not unattainable adventures. This ain't your typical escapism, no quaint markets in France or bike rides in Italy. Less about desire and more about stripping away; feel refreshed by the raw exposure to the wilderness.

Mary-Jane says

I loved this book! I read most of it while I was at a fishing lodge in Canada and I felt like I was immersed in the scenery the author was describing. Anyone who has a respect for the North Country would love reading this book. Oh, how I long to be a voyageur!!

Connie Kronlokken says

Sigurd Olson has a way of writing that shows you his deep excitement for being in the bush. His love of wilderness is shown in his lush writing, and in this book he takes you on some of the adventures, both near his home in the boundary waters between Canada and Minnesota, and into the further north, the pays 'en haut. He tells us of the adventure books he read as a young man and how Robert Service caught the magic

better than anyone else: "There's a whisper on the night wind, there's a star agleam to guide us, And the wild is calling, calling ... let us go."

Hardly anyone writes with this kind of excitement any more. Olson was born the same year Hemingway was, and it is easy to see which of them caught the tide of the culture! Olson did a great deal for all of us, however, working tirelessly to get wilderness areas set aside. This is a great book of stories. He explains the sauna down to the cup of coffee afterwards sitting on the stoop! "Ours was a sense of fullness and belonging to a past of simple ways." Read it, and be reminded that what we think limits us, doesn't really.

Doyle says

Only 56 people have rated this book? Fifty-six! Come on folks!

Jeremy says

I'm a person who loves good nature / outdoor writing. How did it take me so long to find Sigurd Olson? This is a beautiful book, capturing Olson's experience and reflections in the Northern wilderness. Such an important book, not just as nature writing, but also capturing the value of the wild in human experience. I suspect I'll return to this many times.

Tim says

Nice stories and remembrances of the North...homesick.

Mark Geisthardt says

A collection of essays which Sigurd Olson wrote about the far north, near and beyond the Arctic Circle in northern Canada and in Alaska. A great read for those who love wilderness as well as for those who wonder what is the wilderness and why does it matter.

Brian says

I liked this book better than "Reflections". Where Reflections was philosophy, "Runes of the North" was storytelling at its north country finest. Good book.

Tom Baker says

For my money this is one of Sigurd's best. It was kind of an overview of his expeditions in the north.

Tom says

This book came out of my grandfather's house and at first I was surprised, the subject matter and style didn't seem to fit with the man I remember. But, I have a vague recollection of being told that his Christmas trees were always kind of scrawny because he thought the more perfect trees looked better in the woods. I don't know how true that story is, but it fits in with Sigurd Olson's view of the wilderness and god's nature. This book is a collection of canoeing tales of the North woods, from the Boundary Waters to the Yukon and Hudson's Bay. Olson and his companions are modern day voyageurs, covering vast distances with nothing but a compass and a paddle. The woods and waters are beautifully described and clearly loved.

Els says

Five primally magnificent stars to this masterpiece, also: I am definitely moving.

Dick says

I actually have an older edition of this book. I love these books. If you love the wilds or like the idea of loving the wilds, these collections of thought will captivate you. Especially if you have experienced the Boundary Waters region in Minnesota. Sigurd Olson is the wilderness canoist's godfather.

Karla says

Better than the last "Olson" book I read. Enjoyed it.
